

StarTran Overview

StarTran is a division of Public Works and Utilities and is not supported by a dedicated tax levy. The City allocates funding for public transportation annually through the City budget process. Many transit systems are separate entities with authority to tax and possibly issue bonds.

Number of routes: 21

Frequency of service: 30 min during peak, 60 min during non-peak

Hours of service: M-F: 5:15 am - 7:00 p.m., Saturday: 6:00 a.m - 7:00 p.m.

Ridership

Ridership has remained about the same over past few years for fleet and special transportation services

2001-02 Ridership

Fleet 1,529,340

Handi-Van 29,173

Brokerage 22,670

Fleet Size

- 56 35 ft buses

- 9 HandiVans

Typical Riders/Demographics

- mostly female

- mostly young and old

- about 65% transit dependent

- about 35% riders by choice

Bus Trip Purposes

- 60% Work Trips

- 20% School Trips

- 9% Shopping

- 11% Other/Misc

(Source: Comprehensive Transit Marketing Study, 1988, Clark Jones, Inc)

Funding Sources

Annual operating budget for 2002 -03: \$7,341,806

	<u>Operating</u>
Federal	\$ 832,973
State	\$ 133,545
City	\$5,045,526
User Fees	\$1,329,762

StarTran Advisory Board

- Seven citizens, appointed by Mayor and approved by City Council
- Function to advise Mayor, City Council, and PW/U Director concerning StarTran operations, specifically transit studies, routes, fares, schedules

OTHER

Alternate Fuels Program

- StarTran leader in use and promotion of alternative fuels
- 4 buses, ethanol powered (7% ethanol, 93% diesel) and 2 buses, biodiesel (80% diesel/20% soybean oil)

Employee/Student Programs

- Employee Pass Program - 12 employers participate which provides monthly passports at reduced cost to employees
- School tours/presentations - over 1,700 elementary and middle school students contacted each year through class presentations

StarTran is utilized by over 855 LPS students each day to/from school

Big Red Express, Holiday Light Tours

- 6 lots, 6,000 fans per game utilize Big Red Express
- Holiday Light Tour - tours of holiday lights for 4-5 evenings each December since 1995, over 3,000 patrons participate in tour

Bus Advertising

- Currently 10 buses painted or wrapped - generates about \$60,000/year in revenues

StarTran/UNL Program

Contract agreements with UNL since 1994 to operate program:

- Utilization of all StarTran regular transit services by UNL students at no cost, and by UNL faculty and staff at a discounted cost
- Operation of the #24 Holdrege route between downtown and East Campus approximately 422,000 trips per year

24-Hour Telephone Route and Schedule Information Line

- Patrons may call 24 hours, 365 days/year to obtain route schedule information
- Route/Schedule information also available on the internet

Alternative Ride Home Program

A form of insurance for commuters who regularly use StarTran services. In case of an emergency this program gives patrons a free ride from work/school to home. Provides up to 5 free rides/year.

Promotional Programs

StarTran transit services are promoted/advertised to increase service awareness and ridership by:

- **Citizenwide Advertising** is conducted year-around in a general format to promote, heighten awareness, and increase utilization of all StarTran services on three radio broadcasting companies (11 stations), two television broadcasting companies, 5CityTV, one magazine publication, on-board the buses, internet, schedules and the Ride Guide.
- **Special Promotion Advertising** targets specific audiences through special events, new services and programs on three radio broadcasting companies, 5CityTV, the Lincoln Journal Star, bus signage, on-board the buses, and the internet; as well as speaking engagements to special interest groups to promote increased transit ridership.

SHORT-TERM ACTIONS:

Automated Vehicle Location System and "smart card" farebox

AVL system will be placed on all StarTran buses and supervisor vehicles. The AVL system will enable StarTran to more effectively and efficiently monitor and manage bus fleet operations, resulting in improved scheduling and services to the community.

AVL system would leverage the existing AVL communication infrastructure at Metro Area Transit. Connecting to the existing MAT receiver equipment would significantly reduce the initial costs with the project.

Total cost of the project is anticipated to be \$1.4 million of which \$1.2 million are FTA funds and \$280,000 local funds.

"Smart Card" farebox integrated with AVL to allow patrons to utilize a debit card to make fare transactions.

Handi-Van Dispatch Software

An updated dispatch software system will be implemented into Handi-Van operations by 2004. Such new software will afford increases in efficiency and reducing workloads.

Bus Replacement

Funds are included in the CIP for normal replacement of StarTran buses.

In 2004 will receive 8 low-floor buses adding to the fleet of 20 current low floor buses. All buses purchased are accessible to persons with disabilities.

FUTURE PLANNING ACTIONS PER THE COMPREHENSIVE PLAN:

As a public service, StarTran transit service should be funded and supported similar to any other public service. A public transit system of a size and quality commensurate with the needs of future City of Lincoln and Lancaster County residents and businesses is an important element of the Transportation Plan. The following are the policies and actions in the "Public Transportation" portion of the Comprehensive Plan . . .

Balanced Transit System

Monitor and modify transit services in response to changes in development pattern and users' needs.

Transit Friendly Development

Develop direct and continuous pedestrian access standards for new development and redevelopment projects.

Promote mixed-use, high-density activity centers and corridors integrating transit-oriented standards as projects are designed.

Develop and implement transit-oriented design standards for new development.

Maximize Transit Productivity

Develop incentives and land development policies promoting mixed-use, high density development along transit corridors or areas with proximity to existing or future transit service.

Monitor and modify transit services to maximize transit ridership.

Maximize Transit Connections When Structuring Routes

Near-Term: Maintain the current radial network to the Downtown and provide supplemental service to other portions of the urban area with convenient transfer options.

Long-Term: Expand the modified grid system while maintaining the productive elements of the radial system serving Downtown. reallocate less productive radial service into grid services by targeting emerging activity centers and corridors

Accommodate Transit When Designing Roadway Improvements

Develop and apply roadway design standards that support and promote public transit use. These standards should accommodate transit operations and rider safety and comfort.

Explore Regional and Commuter Transit Service Options

Consider rail service and other transit modes to provide regional public transportation services (particularly between Lincoln and Omaha) during the interim and long term.

StarTran Transit Contract Service

Pursue contract transit services funded by various local and federal government funds and rider fares. Other local options for collecting rider fares are through contracted services. One example is the University of Nebraska, which contracts for an inter-campus shuttle and city wide transit service.

Pursue contracted transit service opportunities with employment, entertainment, and commercial uses.

Develop a policy for encouraging major employment, entertainment, and mixed-use centers to utilize contract transit services.

Special Needs Demand Responsive Transit

Pursue coordination with special transit service providers to promote improved operational efficiency and cost effectiveness of special needs transportation services. This will include the coordination of such services to be determined through a planning process with stakeholders, including clients, agencies, and StarTran.

Park-And-Ride Opportunities

StarTran and the City-County Planning Department should define strategic locations in the community for park-and-ride facilities.

Encourage future developers to work with StarTran and the City to include park-and-ride opportunities in their developments.

Long Term Transportation Funding Approach

Conduct a funding and subsidy study to determine the trade-off costs and benefits of various transit funding levels.

Establish a long term funding commitment to public transportation to provide for transit services for existing and future developments within the city.

STARTRAN SPECIAL TRANSPORTATION PROGRAMS:

StarTran Handi-Van Program

- Accessible paratransit, "door-to-door" service, by reservation only
- Nine vehicles, operating 5:15 am - 10:00 pm weekdays; 5:55 am - 7:10 pm Saturdays
- \$2.00 fare per trip - \$60.00 monthly passport available
- Approximately 29,200 passenger trips per year.
- \$1,032,000 annual operating cost - \$35.40 per trip

Brokerage Program

- Contracted private transportation services dispatched in place of Handi-Van - also "door-to-door" service, by reservation only - both accessible and non-accessible services.
- Same operating days, times and patron fare as Handi-Van
- Approximately 23,000 trips per year.
- \$253,000 annual operating cost - \$11.04 per trip

Accessible Regular Transit Services

- All 56 transit coaches are accessible/equipped with wheelchair lifts, 20 of which are state-of-the-art "low-floor" buses.
- All regular route service accessible, operating 5:15 am - 7:10 pm, Monday - Saturday
- Reduced fare (50¢ trip) for elderly and persons with disabilities
- Approximately 3,000 trips per year by persons using bus accessibility equipment.

Coordinated Transportation Pilot Project

Efforts have been underway to develop a coordinated special transportation system to improve the efficiency and cost effectiveness of the many local transportation providers in Lincoln. Such coordination efforts would better meet the transportation needs of persons with disabilities.

Such efforts have included applying for funding through charitable organizations to hire a Transportation Coordinator to promote the incentives of a pilot coordination program, which would include:

- Develop a centralized agency that would combine all transportation provider's vehicles.
- Develop a ride sharing program.